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THE BURDEN OF ISABEL.*

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CHAPTER I.—THE RETURN OF THE MASTER.

To the æsthetically minded, Southern Lancashire is the most provoking and irritating region within the coasts of Great Britain. It constantly suggests that there might have been unrivalled opportunities for delight in the picturesque and the beautiful, had they not been hewn away, trampled on, or covered up by the remorseless genius of modern Lancashire industry. Here, for instance, is a glen which Nature intended to be as romantic as any in the north, with birch-clothed sides, a clear and frolicsome trout-stream, and turf as soft and scented as the mead of Asphodel. Nature's intention, however, has been thwarted, and before us are merely a convenient hollow and convenient water for dye-works: the skyline is cut by a tall smoking chimney; the upper end of the glen is blocked by a pile of building and a dirty dam; the birches are stunted and blighted by smoke and the gases of filthy chemicals; the stream is choked by ashes and other refuse, and is shrunk to an ashamed and noisome dribble; and the mead of Asphodel is turned into a broad cinder-track for mill-hands and coal-carts. That is a common and saddening sight in Southern Lancashire. Yet are there others where it is pleasant and cheering to see that, under proper and kindly control, the genius of modern industry may have room and verge enough without committing outrage of a wanton kind upon dear Mother Nature. Not very far from the glen (or clough) already indicated there is another—or *was*, a few years ago—where Nature had not been outraged, but only tamed a little. There also were chimney-shafts and buildings and a dam; but the chimneys were

notably tall, so that smoke and acrid vapours were carried far above the glen; the buildings were half-hid by healthy and stalwart elms, and smothered with ivy and flowering creepers; and the dam looked like a natural lake, its wholesome waters being inhabited by fish and water-fowl, and by the homely duck and the stately swan, and its shady banks overgrown with flags and meadow-sweet. There the stream was clear, and frolicked gaily along at its own sweet will, flashing over pebbles and circumventing obstructive boulders, or boldly dashing over them. There, too, the turf was turf, green and sweet, where children romped of an afternoon, lads and lasses walked of an evening, and fairies even danced o' nights to the amazement of the prick-eared, half-tame rabbits. And the kindly arranger and controller of all this was George Suffield, cotton-spinner and calico-printer, and Member of Parliament.

On a certain night late in May, Mr Suffield was walking along the brink of the glen on a foot-path that led from the station. He was returning from a sedulous attention to the legislation of the country to enjoy the brief vacation of Whitsuntide in the bosom of his family. It was very late—almost midnight, indeed—but a full moon illumined all the scene with a pale mystic light—the clough, the park beyond it, with the Hall, towards which its master was making his way, and the village before him with its neat cottages and gardens, and its church standing white in the moonlight with its tower and its tapering spire. Suffield walked like a man well pleased with himself and his kind, bearing his

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bulging Gladstone bag, as he did his years, lightly. He was a man of sixty or more, but he was what is called 'well preserved.' His hair and beard were grizzled, that is to say; but, while tall and strongly built, he was straight and ruddy, and he showed a fine, careless, open front to the world. Whether the influence of the moon or the neighbourhood of the fairies of the clough had touched him, he was in a light and vacant mood. He did not whistle as he went 'for want of thought;' but he hummed little catches to himself, and quoted to himself random scraps from his random reading. The tower of the church which he had built caught his roving eye, and he quoted—not too correctly—

They built up the tower of Jumley-Jee.
They built it up to a goodly height
At eleven o'clock on a Thursday night.

'Why Thursday night?' he asked himself, with a low chuckle of enjoyment of the absurdity of the thing. 'And why on earth at eleven o'clock? Ah, well; I suppose it was just meant to make you laugh; and it does.'

Thus he walked leisurely along, enjoying the soft night-air, enjoying the moonlight, enjoying the fair rich scene spread before him, and enjoying above all the sense that he had become the possessor and controller of all he saw by his own effort. He came of an obscure but sturdy and honest stock. His father had been a farmer and weaver, 'back o' th' White Moss,' in the easy old days before Lancashire industry had become so enormous, congested, and reckless. His parents had given him a sound body and a shrewd head, a large heart and a small education, and by the help of God and of a resolute purpose—and, it must be added, of a good wife, whom he adored—he had done the rest himself. Note him well; for he was of a generation that is fast passing away, a generation whose sons seem to lack much of the old Lancashire 'grit,' and the cheery and intrepid energy that set England in the front of the commerce and the humanity of the world.

As he continued his placid way, suddenly there came from the clough beneath him, and, it seemed to him, from a spot not far off, the squeak of a scared or captured rabbit, and close upon it a soothing and satisfied 'Wir-roo!'

'A poacher! The rascal!' exclaimed Suffield to himself.

Without a moment's hesitation, he set down his bag and slipped over the brow of the clough. He had but turned a hillock when, in the shade of two or three birches, he saw a creature in white—man or woman, he could not tell which—kneeling on the ground and holding a struggling rabbit by the ears.

'Put that beast down!' cried Suffield.

'Ow!' exclaimed the creature, at once dropping the rabbit, which bounded away and disappeared in a hole.

'And who the dickens are you to come poaching here?' demanded Suffield. 'Stand up and show yourself.'

The creature in white stood up, and came softly forward into the full moonlight. Suffield was amused to see the creature resolve itself into a black man with very bright eyes and white

teeth, and wearing a big white turban, a kind of white blouse with an ample red sash, and trousers of some dark material. The black man made a profound obeisance with his black hands crossed upon his white breast.

'Respectable sir,' he murmured in a very soft voice. He said no more, but bowed still lower and slowly shook his head, as if to deprecate the white man's anger.

'Where on earth do you come from?' said Suffield. 'Art a boggart?' he demanded, lapsing into dialect, 'or a kind o' demon fro' th' pit?'

'Respectable sir, no,' answered the black man. 'To speak with regards to your terms, I am not a demon, etcetera. I am Daniel—at your kind, respectable services.'

'What?' laughed Suffield, with a pleasant reminiscence in his mind of the judge in *Pickwick*. 'Daniel Nathaniel, or Nathaniel Daniel?'

'Respectable sir, no,' answered Daniel; 'I am Daniel Trichinopoly. The same time I must say I am servant, dressing-boy, and cook, and have answered to several others' capacity as clerk, store-keeper, etcetera, etcetera to a gentleman staying at the great Hall, namely, the Sahib Raynor.'

'Oh, ah!' exclaimed Suffield. 'You're Mr Raynor's black servant. But why couldn't you say that in so many words?'

'Respectable sir,' answered Daniel, 'I am regret to say that I have said it in so many words as I was able.'

'Ah,' said Suffield, with a laugh, 'I make no doubt you have.—Well, Daniel, your master has arrived then. When did he come? To-day?'

'Respectable sir,' answered Daniel, still with mellifluous precision, 'if care should be taken to be true the Sahib Raynor arrived the day before to-day.'

'But you haven't told me, Daniel, how you came to be snaring my rabbits. The rabbits are mine, you know: I am Mr Suffield.'

'Ah, respectable sir, you are indeed the Sahib Suffield? Large and splendid sir, I kiss your hem;' and he was about to carry his salutation into effect.

'No, no, man; don't do that,' said Suffield hurriedly; for he had the English shame of homage of that grovelling sort. 'Stand up and tell me why you were snaring my rabbits: we call it poaching.'

'Poaching!' Daniel accepted the word with a supple bow. 'Now I must say I am taking myself a walk in the scenery, and I am thinking nicely of the moon of India; the same time my sharp eye see a little wild beast run, and I am say to myself: "The little wild beast is made to catch and cook. I am intention to catch and cook and curry him for my master, the Sahib Raynor, etcetera." With regards, large and splendid sir,' said Daniel, with another humble obeisance, 'I hope I am forgive for my own experience. I am just come the day before to-day, and I am still not learned in the manners, customs, ways, etcetera.'

'But, Daniel,' said Suffield, very much interested and amused, 'I thought a Hindu, or a Buddhist—I don't know which you are—was forbidden by his religion to catch and kill any beast.'

'Large and splendid sir,' said Daniel, in an energy of resentment, 'with regard to above I am not Hindu, I am not Buddhist: I am Christian like my master!'

'H'm, ha,' said Suffield, struck by the reply; 'you've had me there. I suppose that is answer enough—that you are Christian—like your master. You've learned your Christian lesson well. And now, you're going back to my house, I suppose, Daniel. Let us walk on together.'

'Large and splendid sir,' said Daniel, making another obeisance with his dingy hands crossed on his white breast, 'I will be highly thankful.'

'God made man upright,' said Suffield to himself, 'but he will bow and wriggle.'

So they climbed out of the clough and returned to find Mr Suffield's bag, which Daniel insisted on carrying; and thus they went on their way through the village, past the works, round the head of the clough, across the stream by a pretty rustic bridge, and into the park properly so called. The park was extensive, and the house—Holdsworth Hall—stood on a gentle eminence about half a mile from the works and the village. Mr Suffield and his strange companion therefore had plenty of time to become acquainted with each other. Suffield was one of those of whom Sir Walter Scott approved, who act, consciously or unconsciously, on the great Roman writer's rule—'nihil humani a me alienum puto'—who are familiar and sympathetic, that is to say, with all sorts and conditions of men, and who think no human creature too humble, too stupid, too ignorant, or too foreign to teach them something. From the dusky Daniel—who, closer at hand and in the fuller light, was seen to be not black, but rather brown or coffee-coloured—he learned, what he already knew fairly well, that cotton-spinning and weaving and calico-printing were rapidly becoming great industries about Bombay; moreover, that Daniel himself when a very young man had worked in a cotton mill, and that he had a longing to become better acquainted with cotton-manufacture in general, because he believed—had he not evidence at his elbow in support of his belief?—that that way splendour and fortune lay. It was a memorable conversation, though, like most things memorable, it became so only in the light of subsequent events—events which appertain to this story.

'It's late; you'd better come in this way,' said Suffield, when they had reached the great Hall door. 'Some of the family up, I see: there's light in the dining-room.'

He knocked and rang a loud peal, and a young gentleman in evening dress and a sleepy-looking elderly servant in knee-breeches came to open the door together. Both appeared a little surprised to see the strange companion the master of the house had got.

'Oh, Trichy,' said the young man, *passim*, 'you're out late.'

'Yes, Sahib George,' grinned Daniel—he had clearly got into the way already of regarding 'Sahib' George as an amusing person—'I appear to be.'

'Well, father,' said George, grasping the paternal hand, 'you've come home at last.'

'Yea, lad,' said Suffield; 'and right glad I am to be out o' that big, roaring London.—And how's things?'

'All right, dad.'

It was good to see the looks of affection and confidence that passed between father and son.

'And how's Tummas?' called Suffield after the elderly man-servant, who was retiring in Daniel's company.

'Pretty bobbish, mester,' answered Tummas, 'as the sayin' is.'

'That's all right,' said Suffield. Then in a low voice he remarked to his son: 'He was going away looking rather disappointed. He thought, I suppose, I had forgotten him, poor owd Tummas!—Is your mother up?'

'No,' answered George—'mother has gone to bed.'

'And Uncle Harry?'

'He has gone to bed too,' said George. 'The rest of us have been to the theatre.'

'Oh, it's father!' cried a charming young lady, jumping up and running to Suffield the moment he showed himself in the dining-room.

'Yes, my lass,' said he, taking her in his arms—she was small and slight, though shapely—'it is feyther.—And here's Cousin Isabel too.'

A tall, dark, and strikingly handsome young lady, who had stood waiting with a smile for her turn to be saluted, now came forward. 'I'm here again, you see, uncle,' said she when she had kissed him.

'You can't come too often, my lass,' said Suffield. 'The only mistake you make, as I've told you before, is not to stay here altogether.'

'It's kind of you to say that, uncle, even though you have said it before. But you know I'm an old maid'—

'An old maid!' exclaimed Suffield's daughter, clasping her round the waist. 'Hear her, father! Hear her, George!—An old maid at four-and-twenty!'

'Still, my dear,' said Cousin Isabel, 'like the old gentleman in the play, I protest in the face of Europe that in essence if not in actual fact I am an old maid. I have my own queer, solitary ways that I should not like to give up.'

'Well,' said Suffield, 'you must be fonder o' other people's brats than I should be, Isabel, to spend all your days teaching one lot after another—one down t' other come on.'

'Don't you speak of teaching, uncle,' laughed Isabel, 'rather as if it were fighting?'

'I know I'd rather do the fighting myself.—Have you had supper? I think I'll just have a mouthful.'

He sat down to eat and drink, and the others sat about him.

'Well,' said Suffield, 'tell me what you saw at the theatre. Was it in the play to-night, Isabel, that the old gentleman protested in the face of Europe? I like that saying; "protected in the face of Europe," I daresay, when he was standing in his own back-kitchen.'

'Something like that, uncle,' answered Isabel. 'But it was not in the play to-night; it's in a French play.'

'Oh, ah,' said her uncle; 'a French play: Frenchies say that kind o' thing. What was the play, then, to-night?'

George answered his father in some detail. It was notable that he had not spoken till then, that while Cousin Isabel had been excusing herself, he had appeared uneasy, not to say impatient

and hurt, and that he had cast on her several appealing looks, of which she had remained either unconscious or regardless. About the quality of the play and the players the young people did not agree. Both play and players were London successes—a fact which seemed to subdue what critical judgment the easy and good-natured George possessed: like most of the younger generation, he believed in all things metropolitan; he had his coats, his hats, and his boots made in London; his favourite reading was the London papers; and he was constantly ‘running up to town.’ His sister, Euphemia, did not even affect to be critical; she bubbled over with direct, unthinking enthusiasm, and thought everything she had seen—especially the dresses—‘quite too lovely.’ Cousin Isabel, on the other hand, was not only critical, but—it seemed to the others—irreverent and revolutionary. She not only called the play a vulgar travesty of a noble story, but laughed at the silly sentimentalism and the mean and jerky elocution with which the parts had been rendered; moreover, she declared that, if such things continued to be generally admired and praised, the theatre would be as little worth going to as a ‘penny reading.’ These opinions unutterably disturbed the three Suffields, whose only doubt hitherto had been that the theatre was not morally beyond reproach. And yet they could not ignore or despise what she said; for, apart from the fact that all three were fond of her, they all believed in her cleverness and her judgment, and in her prescriptive right to be severely critical of all things: was she not—though of their family—a teacher in a celebrated Ladies’ College in London, and by that token a kind of animate encyclopædia of knowledge?

‘Ah, well,’ said the benign Suffield, summing up and closing the discussion, ‘you’re beyond me, Isabel. You strike a high note that I can’t reach—a very high note indeed. But tell me—did any of you see Ainsworth there?’

‘Of course,’ answered the brother and sister together; ‘he was there for the paper.’

‘That’s all right,’ said their father. ‘He’ll settle it for us. We’ll see what he says about it in the morning’s paper.’

‘He won’t go against the verdict of London,’ said George.

‘Oh, won’t he?’ said his father. ‘Perhaps he won’t and perhaps he will; but it won’t depend on what he cares for what they say or what they think in London. I doubt very much if there’s any writer on the London papers cleverer than himself, or as clever. He has a fine head on him, has Alan; he’s half Scots and half Lancashire, and he’ll go far.—You remember Ainsworth—don’t you, Isabel? He’s dramatic critic and all the rest of it for the *Gazette*.’

‘Oh yes,’ said Isabel, ‘I remember Mr Ainsworth.’

‘Well, now,’ said her uncle, looking at his watch, ‘it’s time we all went to bed.’

When the girls withdrew, he and George went round to see that all doors and shutters were secured, and then ascending to their rooms, they said ‘good-night’ at the top of the stairs. But on his way to his own room Suffield observed that the door of the great spare room stood open, where, he imagined, Uncle Harry, the ‘Sahib’ Raynor, was put up. He looked into the room,

and discovered that the bed, though tumbled, was empty. In perplexity and alarm, he called his son softly.

‘This is Uncle Harry’s room, isn’t it?’ he asked.

George answered that it was; and he, too, looked in to make sure that Uncle Harry was not playing them a prank; but neither in bed, nor under it, nor in wardrobe or cupboard, could Uncle Harry be found.

‘What the dickens can have become of him?’ said Suffield. ‘Perhaps your mother will know.’ He entered his wife’s room, and soon returned relieved and chuckling. ‘What do you think?’ he said to his son. ‘Your mother tells me he’s camping out! He has been so many years used to sleeping out o’ doors, that he can’t be comfortable in a proper bed and a proper bedroom, and he begged your mother to let him take a blanket out into the park! He’s a caution; but I’ll find him i’ th’ morning.’

CHRISTMAS-TIME IN FLORIDA.

By CHARLES EDWARDS.

As a Briton unused to an excess of vermin and black faces, Jacksonville impressed me most for the enormity of its spiders, its nightly visitations of mosquitoes, and its negro population. There was also the sand. It is one of the sandiest places in the world. A walk of a couple of miles in any direction was no joke; and even in December the noonday sun was not a thing to face with impunity.

I found the city remarkably full of people. The newspapers told in their own sweet way about the extraordinary immigration of delicate Northerners and impecunious Britons into the State. The former were here for the winter, and in my opinion they were not too wise to come to a part of the world which sometimes showed a variation of fifty degrees of temperature in a single day. As for the latter, of course they were after orange groves, fruit farms, and that sort of thing. Without wishing to decry Florida as a field for honest labour and the investment of money, I can’t help saying that it is far from being the gold mine it was fancied to be. Orange trees are not robust: a frost plays sad havoc with a crop. Save oranges and garden produce, Florida has next to nothing to offer the worker as a reward for his work. In addition to invalids and immigrants, a British aristocrat or two were here for the shooting. The darkies were profoundly aggrieved to find that these gentlemen differed physically not at all from themselves, save in colour. They expected a lord to be of a more exalted order in human nature.

Our house backed upon the great St John’s River, which is such a valuable thoroughfare for the State. Nightly we heard the bellowing of its steamers in the midst of the unpleasant fog of a subtropical kind which veiled it from the sight of the stars. This mist fell upon it soon after the variegated hues of sunset had coloured the sky, and did not lift of a morning until the sun was hot and dazzling in the heavens. It was enchanting to see the cypress and oak on the other bank of the river break through the mist; but the mist itself is sheer poison to certain

constitutions. One understands why the Florida doctors forbid their patients—and even men who are not ill—to stir out of doors after dark, and to be abroad until the day has well advanced. Such injunctions are a notable bar to the enjoyment of life in a strange country.

It was due to the damp of the river that our outbuildings were of the rottenest description, though only a few years old. And no doubt these circumstances favoured our spiders. Of all ghoulish monsters, I wish to see none more odious than the colonies of these spiders that occupied all the available corners of the sheds. Thick-bodied and hairy, with agile hairy legs, it was enough to frighten a timid person to see one of them suddenly scamper in his direction. But our black domestic merely laughed at them, and put her large flat feet upon them when they gave her the chance. She was a merry, irresponsible young person, like most of her kind, and thought nothing of hanging our pyjamas on the prickly pear-tree in the garden, when she wished to air the things. It is easier to hint at than describe the consequences of such a crime. The needles of the pear-tree stuck into us in a hundred places simultaneously.

Of course one does not expect mosquitoes even in Florida in mid-winter—at least in an uncomfortable number. No matter; there they were. Only when a cold snap came and dropped the thermometer to thirty-three degrees or so were our nights quite free from them. At other times their melodious trumpeting sounded in the dark hours and tempted to madness. Many of the visitors to the Southern State carried about with them most uncouth faces, due to the earnest workmanship of these little darlings. You could always at the post-office of a morning—when the 'queue' of strangers waiting for their letters was sometimes thirty or forty feet long—pick out a few individuals who were a sight to distress their parents. On the other hand, the darkies and the primrose-complexioned natives showed no signs of this kind of affliction.

Jacksonville was lively enough after the provincial American fashion. That is to say, it abounded with land-prospectors and land-sellers, who could lie without an effort in the most picturesque fashion; all its hotels and lodging-houses were well occupied; quack doctors paraded the streets with their appanages of sham Indians in sham-Indian war-paint; and after dark the different bar-rooms were noisy. The steamers, too, which arrived and left were crowded to excess. Sleeping accommodation of the orthodox kind on board was only for the fortunate few, and meals were going all day long for the relays who waited for them. One or two of the churches, moreover, had visits from preachers of European fame, and in one of them the soloist in the Te Deum anthem was a young lady with a notorious voice, of which she made the most as she stood on the altar steps facing the congregation, music-copy in hand. Of high-class secular music and other entertainments there was, however, an absolute dearth. Fiddles and concertinas in the bar-rooms—where about ten thousand different drinks at ten cents apiece might be obtained—did not recommend themselves particularly. Perhaps the medical advice about shunning the night-air had something to do with this.

Certainly, except in the main street of the city, if you were out after dark, you seemed to have the world much to yourself.

To form some idea of the State and its development, we travelled for three weeks in it. For the mere novelty's sake this was worth doing. But there was much of extreme interest in the physiognomy of the country, whether as untroubled forest or attractive orange groves, and, to me at least, the settlers also were quite engrossing. We travelled by river steamboat, railway, the inevitable buggy, which bounds over a tree-trunk without capsizing you, and by trading-smack in the Gulf of Mexico. And when we were back again in Jacksonville, having in the meantime become landed proprietors with all the attendant responsibilities, we felt well able to tell all and sundry our opinion of the State.

Nothing was more surprising than the number of Britons upon whom we chanced in out-of-the-way settlements. Sometimes they had their wives with them; more often they were young men working tooth and nail to establish a homestead and income that should enable them to send to the old country for a bride. It was rare in the extreme to find any one who was not hopeful and more than hopeful about his future. Even old men here babbled amazingly about their plans as they led us over their estates and showed us orchards and sugar-plantations which a year or two back were mere pine forest or insalubrious swamp.

One night a lake steamer put us ashore in a spot that gave promise of affording very poor accommodation, if any. The lake was a third-rate water-way, and the steamer was a toy steamer, chartered for the mails and nothing else. However, ashore we went under guidance, and walked for half an hour through a forest, the tall trees of which with their gigantic undergrowth—an unusual feature for Florida—quite hid the stars from us, though these were also well concealed by the omnipresent evil mist. We were received at length in a certain store, feasted in a picturesque fashion on venison and duck—the deer had been shot that afternoon, and hung against the wall—and then put to bed in an outhouse. I cannot say much for the tranquillity of our slumbers. The shed was populous with rats, which raced even over the bed; and there was an owl in the room, which bothered our nerves considerably until we understood it. As this was also one of the 'cold-snap' days, we had a frigid night of it in this well-ventilated bed-chamber. Nevertheless, the morning found us fresh enough, and eager to see what we could of this district.

One of the first scenes that met our eyes after breakfast, when we had driven for a while through an astounding area of orange groves—every tree laden with fruit—did credit to our homeland. We came upon a tiny lake. Near it was a wooden shed, whence the whir of machinery sounded, and towards which a couple of span of mules were dragging pine-logs to be sliced into timber. The presiding spirits of this scene were a stout middle-aged man and his son—a fine hale young fellow; and glad enough were they to stop for a while and gossip with us. They were a couple of Yorkshiremen, a few months only in Florida. And in that time they

had established a trio of orange groves, which promised exceedingly well, built a villa of the usual kind with four rooms, fixed a saw-mill, stocked the little lake hard by with carp, and conceived a few score schemes for their speedy and substantial enrichment. They took us to their house, and regaled us on pork and beans at noon, showed us their poor little sandy garden and their multitudinous poultry, and also showed us, in a packing-case, a piano which had come south from New York in readiness for the arrival from England of the wife and daughters of the elder man. In Yorkshire, these worthy fellows had been common carpenters. In less than a year in Florida they had become settlers of the best class, and enlarged their minds amazingly in the necessary exercise of a number of faculties that in England had lain dormant, or nearly so. But the native instinct was strong in them still; for ere we left them—sounding Florida's praises to the last—they tried with painful earnestness to sell us a horse, and in default of a horse, a shot-gun that 'for turkey was absolutely impossible to beat.'

Green pine forests sweet to smell, with the blue sky overhead; pestilential swamps, with snakes slinking among the logs, and the roots of the cypresses standing quaintly in the water; broad reaches and miles square of tall saw-grass, which would have made us 'tattered and torn' had we tried to cross them; lilled lakes, with the snouts of alligators taking the air on the surface, or more often on their banks, dense with varied vegetation; acres upon acres of fascinating orange groves; and here and there a pretty coterie of white clean-looking bungalows, with green shutters, and a knot of extremely tanned gentlemen in scanty raiment to each coterie of houses—such are the conventional sights of inland Florida. The romance of the country is of Nature alone; for though the Spaniards in the sixteenth century gave the State a tincture of modern history, this applies only to a very small part of it. To my mind, at any rate, there was more of the romance of history in the little graveyard to each little village, with the simple inscriptions on the simple wooden crosses, and the thickly intertwined thorn hedges to keep the wild hogs from profaning the enclosures. Now and again we came upon a lady dressed as if she were going to a meet in Leicestershire. Her horse was either with her or not far off; and her husband was within a day's ride of her. There was no mistaking the Briton in her; and one of these settlers told us how she enjoyed the freedom of the life, even though socially it was 'shocking.' But upon the whole the British lady does not seem to thrive here so well as her husband or brothers. The thornfaced graveyards told us this much, and we got enough verbal confirmation of the fact.

We happened to be in one of these remote settlements on a day eventful in the history of the village itself. The oldest inhabitant, in fact the founder of the place, lay dead in his house; and his funeral was to take place in the afternoon. On all sides of the village the pine forest extended. Pine forest and blue sky made up the outlook beyond the houses. The day was enchanting, and I never saw so many different varieties of butterflies in an hour as

here while lounging on the village green with all the male population, waiting for the appearance of the mortuary car. This latter duly came towards us at length. It was the deceased man's own cart, which had carried many a case of his oranges to the nearest place of shipment; and the man's own coloured servant held the horse's head, sobbing without restraint while he walked. All the village and divers outlying settlers were present; and the church, a white-faced pine-panelled building with a belfry, upon which a great gray buzzard had perched, as if to see the procession, was filled with people. The clergyman was an old man, and—they told us—a very intimate friend of the dead man's. Be that as it may, he could hardly go through the service, and the very audible weeping of the congregation seemed to add to his emotion. The climax came, however, when the coffin was unscrewed again before the altar, and nearly every member of the congregation filed past to look once more upon the dead face of the father of the village. The clergyman covered his eyes with his handkerchief, and no one seemed willing to try to control his grief. I was never present at a more moving scene. Its concluding features were comparatively simple. We all followed the old man to the cemetery in the forest, and there he was laid to rest deep in the whitish sand. And ten minutes afterwards the mourners had reminded each other that a duty is owed to the living as well as the dead. The perfume of their cigars as they strolled back to the village was wafted over the newly-made mound and carried far into the forest. But the old clergyman returned to his house by himself, with bent sorrowful head; nor did he smoke like his fellow-men.

This village was in many respects a typical Florida settlement. It was in daily expectation of that curious American characteristic known as a 'boom.' It advertised its charms and pecuniary attractions for capitalists in the newspapers of Jacksonville and New York; and its wide-awake citizens closed about the stranger at their hotel, as if they were determined he should not leave them till he had bought a hundred or two acres of their land. The hotel keeper was of course in collusion with the citizens. The consequence was that we were bothered almost out of our few wits by the pertinacity of our visitors. At breakfast and dinner we were surrounded by gentlemen with land to sell, and they much interfered with our appetite. We could not even stroll into the hotel garden to pick our dessert from the trees—a privilege readily allowed—without an escort, and the oranges served as a text for new orations about the peculiar fitness of the surroundings for orange groves or aught else.

Christmas Day came upon us while we were thus wandering in the Florida wilds. It seemed as unlike Christmas weather as it well could be. We anchored for the festival at the city of Tampa on the Gulf coast. Somehow, I do not think with impartial respect of this city of Tampa, important and rather pretty place though it is. That is because it laid me up with an attack of dysentery, however, and so the fact need not stand to Tampa's discredit. Of all white places, commend me to this. Its sand is quite

preposterous, and far into the forest the ruts which indicate its highways towards other towns were almost deep enough for the interment of a body.

A thermometer at eighty-five degrees seemed inconsistent with plum-pudding and roast turkey. Still, we remembered the home traditions, and so did the host of our hotel. And afterwards we reposed in hammocks hung between the orange trees of the orchard, and smoked cigars, while wondering what England would think if it could suddenly on this 25th of December exchange skies with Florida. In the evening we strolled towards the quay to see the coral and gold and pale purple of the heavens in their brief twilight afterglow. The air was heavy with the perfume of orange and lemon flowers, and soft and caressing to a marvel. Sounds of revelry reached us from the shanties of the coloured people, who abound in Tampa, and who love all holiday pretences. And a pair of small black urchins preceded us jocosely down the yielding street with a sugar-cane between them, each chewing at his own end. When we caught the youngsters, for the jest's sake we asked them what they meant by such conduct. 'It's Christmas, sarr,' replied the bolder of the two. Then down went the sun over the still silvery surface of the Bay, and for a few moments Tampa and its forest setting stood out in strong relief, until the mist began to steal over all things, including the opaline sky above us.

When we were again in Jacksonville, our opinion of Florida was almost exalted enough to match that of the land-agents themselves. Subsequent experiences, however, have duly moderated our enthusiasm. It is, after all, a country like other countries—with advantages and defects that equitably dovetail in each other.

ISABEL DYSART.*

By MRS OLIPHANT.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

'You will have to make up your mind, my bonnie woman. Lads like you will not hang on for ever at the pleasure of a—bit slip of a creature like you.'

'You were going to call me a worse name,' cried Isabel.

'Well: I was maybe going to call you a little flirt of a thing that delighted in mischief, and in turning older folk round her little finger.'

'Whatever I do, I cannot turn you round my little finger, mother! You just sit there and smile, and hear everybody speak, and do what you've settled to do. I would sooner try to draw Edinburgh Castle down from the rock than to change your mind; and what do I care for Uncle John or Aunt Mary—or—or a few lads, if you make me say it: when you just sit smiling there like Arthur's Seat and never mind!'

'Well, my dear, you are grand with your

similes; but the Castle Rock and Arthur's Seat are curious images for me.'

Mrs Dysart looked out of the seat in the window which she always occupied, upon the objects of which she spoke. It was a small square window, placed in a deep little recess in the thick wall, filled with greenish glass in small panes: and the prospect visible from it was no less than the distant city of Edinburgh—the Castle rock standing up upright through the mist, and the great Salisbury Crags, and the softer slope of Arthur's Seat clear to the east, in misty sunshine. These salient points were by so much the most important things in the landscape and world, that they continually came into the talk, as they were always in the vision, of the people about. The room inhabited by these two people was an old-fashioned, low-roofed room with five windows, from two or three of which this matchless view was to be seen. One of the others looked straight into a great ash, a sort of forest in itself; and the last was over a bright, old-fashioned garden full of flowers and light. The walls were covered with the abundant growth of a jargonelle pear-tree, upon which the pears had lately hung thick, ripe, and beautiful to behold. The flowers in the garden were chiefly dahlias, brilliant though unattractive; but this was partially made up for by the beds of mignonne, in its full autumnal flower, filling the whole atmosphere with a mild sweetness. The house was all old-fashioned, and so was the mistress of it, sitting in what was considered in those days an easy-chair, with stiff arms and a high seat, which gave her a dignity of which our low and luxurious seats are destitute. She had her feet upon a footstool, and a work-table open at her side with all the implements of her sewing arranged in blue silk compartments. Her dress was of black silk, not high to the throat, but closing over a spotless handkerchief of white net; and she wore a long white muslin apron reaching almost to the bottom of her gown. Her white cap was tied by white ribbons under her chin. There could not have been a more pleasing picture of a mother; but this garb, though so pretty in itself, made her perhaps look older than a woman of her years should have looked. Our mothers were certainly older in those days than the mothers of girls of twenty are now.

Isabel, however, was more than twenty by a few years. She had remained unmarried much beyond the tradition of her family, 'till it was just a scandal,' her aunt said. She was so far before her age that the mischance of being too well off, too happy at home, which interferes so much with marriages nowadays, showed itself already in this young woman, so advanced for her period; though, indeed, there was perhaps another obstacle in the fact that Isabel was the youngest—the only one left at home—and that when she finally made up her mind to leave her

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mother's house, Wallyford would be but a solitary place and Mrs Dysart a dweller alone. I do not mean to assert for a moment that this fact would have prevented Isabel's marriage had she made up her mind; for Mrs Dysart was not only a woman of great resolution, but of indomitable pride, and would no more have permitted a daughter's sacrifice than she would have allowed herself to stand in need of being taken care of. 'Me! to keep my bairn out of her natural life!' she would have said. There was a great deal of philosophy in the well-braced-up and independent mind of a woman of the better class of rural respectability—having no pretension, however, to be of a county family or superior to her neighbours—in those days: and a strong stand for what was natural and lawful and of good report. If her heart sometimes sank to think what her lonely days and lonely house would be when Isabel was gone, yet no cloud was ever visible upon her comely forehead on this account. It was the course of Nature. The last thing in the world which she would have accepted or agreed to was that Isabel should not marry. That was inevitable; as for herself, she would make up her mind to it as mothers have had to do since the world began.

'My dear, it's easy to speak of the lads and of doing what you like with them, at present. I'll not say for the minister. He's so superior to you, Bell, that he will just say, "It's her way, poor lassie," and give in to you however camstairy you may be; but yon doctor-lad is a dour fellow. I would not like, for my part, to take it upon me to oppose him'—

'Superior to me!' cried Isabel; 'that's not the way to make me take to him, mother—though I know you were always in his favour. Superior! I would like to see the man'—

'That would say that? He'll not say it, my dear; but he's a man that is above the common clashes and little ways of thinking. He would not even feel it; he would say to himself, "Poor bit thing; she has her nerves and so forth;" or, "She's more sensitive than I am;" or'—

'I know you were always in his favour, mother,' said Isabel stiffly. 'A minister! That goes above everything with some folk. And you never could put up with poor Willie Torrence.'

'Put up with him!' said Mrs Dysart. 'I can put up with just anything. Have I not put up with your sister Jeanie's man, that makes me grind my teeth every word he speaks?—Oh yes, I'll put up with him! but how you are to do it, yourself'—

'We'll see about that,' said Isabel, flushed and rebellious. Opposition made her instinctively turn in the forbidden direction, which Mrs Dysart was too wise a woman not to know. But our wisdom does not always guide our actions: or perhaps, indeed, she meant to move her child to a decision whatever it might be—thinking that better than the uncertainty in which, so far as Isabel herself was concerned, there was a vague pleasure. 'The little cutty was fond of having all the lads in the parish after her,' her Aunt Mary said. It is to be hoped that there were more 'lads' (which is a word that ought to be pronounced, as everybody knows, with a very broad vowel—not exactly 'laud,' as it is written by the ignorant Southron, but something inclin-

ing thereto) in the parish of Tranent than the young minister and the young doctor; and perhaps it was scarcely respectful to call a 'placed minister'—not a young probationer, to whom the title is specially appropriate—a lad. But Nature will be Nature even when the gravest title is put before a young man's name. Bishops even and Reverend Doctors make love and marry, and lay themselves open to undignified appellations sometimes—and the Reverend Mr Murray was a young man in fact as well as in sentiment. And he was a handsome young man, much more so than Torrence, the young doctor, whose qualities were as different as possible from those of the mild Murray—a sharp, quick-witted, practical-minded, yet, in his grim way, enthusiastic medicine man, eager in everything that concerned his profession, and sure, everybody said, to rise in it.

That, perhaps, was one thing which attracted Isabel. She, too, was full of spirit and ambition, not content to settle down quietly and tend the sheep in the quiet parish in which she had been born, if there was a prospect of something more stirring and exciting outside in the bigger world. The stir of the atmosphere about Torrence, the new wonders of science and discovery of which he spoke, and even his contempt for the stagnation of the rural world about, had a charm for this inexperienced girl. And yet there were things that jarred. It is rare when there is not something that jars between a young man and a young woman thus hesitating before the decision. While the tide has not yet completely carried away their lingering feet, the steps always keep starting from each other more or less, here and there. The man has his own side of this question, which, to do him justice, he does not, either by himself or his exponents, much dwell upon; but the girl's little starts and pauses, her moments of alarm and uncertainty, the quick impression of a moment against, as well as the impulse towards, the man who is her fate, are often very apparent and very interesting. Isabel was in this condition now. The tide was drawing her on sometimes with a very swift impulsion, swifter than she was at all aware of: but now and then there came a sudden start and stop.

Willie Torrence had been her playfellow when they were children, and she had been accustomed to his constant society all her life. She had a hundred recollections of him through all his boyhood, not all of them favourable; sometimes there would leap into her mind a sudden picture of something he had said or done years ago—something, nothing—a look, a gesture which would cause one of these starts aside—though, indeed, he had just been as other boys, and Isabel had always liked him. Nothing like this ever occurred in respect to young Mr Murray, who was good, and *nice*, and handsome, and far more respectful, even reverential, of the woman in her than Torrence—so respectful, indeed, that Isabel, knowing she was not Miranda or Rosalind, was sometimes a little humbled, but much oftener, I am afraid, amused by his persistent imputation of all their splendours and delights to a little country girl by no means accustomed to such poetical adoration. Torrence's light call to 'Bell,' whom he had so addressed when she was a baby, was often more congenial to her than the 'Miss

Isabel,' with the accent on the first syllable of her name, which the minister uttered as if it were the name of a Queen: and yet—

'I wish,' said Mrs Dysart, 'if you have nothing else to do, that you would go down to your uncle, Isabel, and see if there's any more news about these dreadful things in Edinburgh. It is the day for the *Courant*, and he will be very full of it. I am not a person for murders and such awful stories: but Lord bless us, a thing that is just a danger and a horror to us all'—

'What should we have to do with it in a quiet country place?' said Isabel: but she said it simply out of contradiction, with the natural instinct of a healthy girl. For as a matter of fact, she had herself been very much more nervous about the bit of road which lay under the shadow of the old house of Wallyford, a great old roofless and ruinous mansion within a stone's throw of the little Wallyford of to-day—since the dreadful news had come from Edinburgh of the murders of Burke and Hare, which scared the whole country-side far more than any crime of a more usual kind could have done. It was such a horror and a mystery as might well disturb the imagination. And it was a bad time altogether for the popular fancy. Stories of resurrection men and of desecrated graves were rife, and chilled the mind with horror, and the dreadful revelation of mysterious murders, how many and by what means accomplished no one could yet tell, gave a sombre excitement to the public, which had not the incessant reports we have now to satisfy its curiosity and subdue its terrors. A weekly paper was the most that any one had to bring him information of what went on from day to day, and even that was a luxury which but few allowed themselves for their own enjoyment alone. 'A look at the *Courant*,' or a share with three or four others in the *Scotsman*, according to the politics of the reader, was all that most people allowed themselves. Uncle John, as an old navy man, was staunch for Church and State, and took the *Courant*, while the *Scotsman* was Mrs Dysart's paper. She had a kind of surreptitious advantage in consequence, getting as it were two sets of news.

The house of Wallyford was an old-fashioned two-storied house, with a rounded projection on one side for the ample staircase, which was lit by a large long window: a cosy kitchen downstairs, with a red brick floor, through which the family went and came, leaving the front door for great occasions, was occupied by one large and powerful maid-servant, who performed all the work of the house, and was capable of as much again, even though the caps and kerchiefs of the Mistress were, as Janet said, very 'fyky,' and took a great deal of ironing.

'You'll be gaun out, Miss Isabell,' said Jenny—with the accent on the last syllable—which was a self-evident observation.

'Yes, I am going out,' said Isabel; 'and Jenny, you'll mind to take my mother her cup of tea.'

'The Mistress'll no want while I'm to the fore,' said Jenny with a glance of indignation. Five-o'clock tea did not exist formally in these primitive days, but 'a cup of tea' has always been an institution.—'And you'll be hame yourself in good time?' Jenny added, coming out to the door to look after her young mistress. 'The

days are just creeping in dreadful, and the road's lonesome in the dark.'

To this Isabel vouchsafed no reply. The road was not lonesome to her, who knew every step of it, if it was not perhaps just that bit already referred to where the great ruined house of Wallyford stood out with its roofless gables against the sky, casting a shadow which was blacker than anything Isabel knew. It was a bright October afternoon, and the sun was still high over Edinburgh Castle, shining red through the misty atmosphere and smoke which gave its name to Old Reekie. The trees were almost as bright in their garments of many colours as the sky—save those big ashes which still retained their green, and added to the shadows round the old house. Isabel went briskly along towards Musselburgh in her short-waisted, long-skirted pelisse of dark blue cloth, a slim figure with the lightest step in the world skimming over the long road. She was turning over her own little problem in her mind—which, indeed, was no little problem to her, but concerned her whole life—when she set out: but the air and the freshness of the ruddy afternoon, lighted up by the glory of the trees, all red and golden, and the warmth of the sun, which threw a long shadow in front of her as she went towards Musselburgh, and the distant gleam of the bay before, its great waters glowing and heaving in the ruddy westering light—soon blew away everything save that nameless exhilaration of youth which movement and exercise and air bring back, whatever preoccupation may have momentarily driven it away. Isabel had forgotten all about Burke and Hare, and indeed had ceased entirely to think of Willie Torrence and the Rev. James Murray, for some time before she arrived at the door of her uncle John, who lived in a cosy little house surrounded by a shrubbery, on the way to the sea.

Uncle John was an old sailor, not holding any very high grade in the navy, but dignified in his retirement by the title of Captain; and his wife, a pretty little round-faced woman, fond of pink ribbons in her cap and everything that was cheerful. The old skipper took his walk to Fisherrow every morning to the pier and harbour, to give his opinion upon the weather and hear what boats were out, and the fish that had been caught, and anything that might have happened to the *Lively Peggy* or the *Bonnie Jean*, or any other of the little red-sailed, heavy-timbered fleet. But that duty accomplished, without which it was doubtful whether the little port and the proper sequence of good and bad weather could have been duly regulated, established himself for the rest of the day in his dining-room, he on one side of the fire, and his wife on the other, not ill pleased to hear a visitor at the door. It was a high day when it was the day for the newspaper, into which he plunged the moment his early dinner was over, while she sat patient, yet excited, waiting for the pieces of news which he read aloud. People thought it rather grand and decidedly extravagant of Captain John to take in the *Courant* for his own reading, instead of thriftily sharing the price with two or three neighbours: but then, to be sure, he and his wife had no children, no sons to set out in the world, which made a great difference: and they were very good about lending it in the end of the week.

The newspaper day was the only day when this good couple did not care for visitors, and it was with an exclamation of relief that Aunt Mary cried out, 'Eh, it's just Easabell,' when the door opened, making the girl 'Come in to the fire,' with a delighted welcome. 'Ye'll no disturb your uncle in his reading; and I have just an uncommon fine seedcake, new cut, to keep you going,' she whispered, setting Isabel down on a chair close to her uncle, who patted her arm affectionately, by way of greeting, as he went on. There was nothing unusual in this welcome to Isabel, who accepted the slice of cake with a smile, and did her best to bring down her mind to Uncle John's reading, which was emphatic if not very steady, since the good man had a way of losing his place.

'You're a great interruption to the reading,' said the old gentleman, when this happened, patting Isabel again with his large soft hand. 'You little thing, you put everything out of her head. She was breathless a moment since to hear of Burke and Hare—and now she's forgotten everything but a piece for Isabell.'

'It's an awful story,' said Aunt Mary, sitting down again. 'It's gruesome to hear of such things.'

'Such things! There's been nothing like it in my time,' said Uncle John. 'And these doctors—I cannot think but they're just as bad as the murderers themselves.' He brought down his fist upon the table with a subdued exclamation, which was not adapted for publication. 'I'd swing them up to the yardarm alongside of the butchers themselves,' he cried.

'Oh John!' cried Aunt Mary; 'well-educated, clever men!'

'And all the worse for that,' said the sea-captain—then he resumed his reading; and Isabel, too, fell under the fascination of the terrible tale. Besides, was not that what she had come for, to take the fresh news to her mother? What with the reading, and what with the commentaries upon it, the twilight had begun to fall before she sprang up and declared she must run home. 'Before it gets dark. I'll be frightened to pass the old house,' cried the girl.

This was the reason why she was so late on the road, which indeed was lonesome in the dark, though so familiar. Isabel hurried on with her heart beating, and a sensation of fright quite unusual to her. I remember, many years later, how almost every child in Scotland trembled for the possibility of something pouncing upon it out of every dark corner, a dreadful hand upon its mouth. To hear of that traffic in death when it had just happened was certainly more appalling still. She hurried along, trying to think of something else, until there rose before her the great old house of Wallyford, its roofless gables relieved against a sky still blue in the lingering evening light, but casting shadows of inky darkness on the road which wound under its walls. What a place for a horrible wretch to start out to seize unseen the hapless victim! To be sure, these men were in prison; they could do no more harm—but; to be sure, there never were any villains like that about our countryside: to be sure—

But just as she came to the edge of the shadow,

something did dart out upon Isabel. She gave a great cry of horror, and fled, but was caught by a strong arm. And then there rang a loud laugh into her ears. 'Did you think I was going to Burke you, Bell?'

But the shock was too much for the girl. 'Oh Willie Torrence, Willie Torrence, how dare you frighten me so?' she cried, and burst into wild tears. In his arms! it made her furious afterwards to remember—but at the moment she had no power of escape from that bold kiss with which he took advantage of the panic he had caused.

PARLIAMENTARY MANNERS AND HUMOURS.

A BYGONE Speaker publicly observed upon a notable occasion from his chair of state that the House of Commons is 'no school for manners.' In more recent times the same qualified reproach may occur to the minds of outsiders, who occasionally read newspaper reports of parliamentary scenes and episodes more lively than courteous. The popular representative assembly, nevertheless, expects all its members to obey a code of etiquette which, whilst it allows them a good deal of latitude in some respects, yet regulates even minute points of behaviour with an exacting rigour unknown to the general public. There is no written law on the subject—no book to instruct novices in the traditional customs of the legislative chamber. New members of the new Parliament and their friends, as well as other readers, may therefore be interested in a brief account of some of the ceremonial conditions imposed upon her household by the 'Mother of Parliaments.'

One of the first peculiarities to strike a visitor is the freedom which permits members to keep on their hats during the progress of public business. But this liberty has its limits. A member may not wear his hat as he enters or leaves the House, or when he stands at the bar, although he may put it on as soon as he takes his seat. If a colleague engages in conversation with him, he uncovers his head, and so must he of course when he rises to address the House. Another requirement is that a member must only make a speech from one of the accustomed seats, never from the entrance, the bar, or the gangway. The same rule is observed when he rises to order in the course of debate; but if he raises a point of order concerning a division which has been already called, he must keep his seat and speak with his hat on. Even the Speaker in such cases does not rise when he interposes with his ruling, so that the proceedings assume a somewhat easy-going conversational character. On one occasion of the kind, the late Professor Fawcett, who then sat below the gangway, was unable, being blind, to find his own hat quickly enough. He overcame the emergency, however, by borrowing the well-known soft cap of his neighbour, Mr Joseph Cowen, which, although it neither fitted nor suited him, yet served the purpose of the moment. The effect was ludicrous, but not more so than at another similar crisis when Mr Gladstone hastily borrowed the hat of another occupant of the front Opposition bench, and found it so much too small

for him that he had to hold it on until the point in dispute was settled.

Although members are naturally expected to rise when delivering a speech, exceptions are made in favour of any who from sickness or infirmity are unable to stand. This allowance had of course to be always made in the peculiar case of the late Mr Kavanagh, an Irish member who, although without arms or legs, yet proved himself thoroughly capable, when carried to his place, of performing all the duties of a legislator. Members are constantly either coming or going in the course of debate, and, as common politeness would suggest, none may pass between the Speaker and the gentleman who is addressing the House. Any infraction of this or the other rules is promptly challenged on all sides by loud cries of 'Order,' amid which the possibly unintentional offender hurries away, more or less abashed, to avoid more serious consequences. In addition to these rules, from which even silent members are not exempt—and many have been in the House of Commons for years without making a speech—there are other points to be kept in mind by those who from time to time join in the debates. For instance, the reading of a prepared written speech is not allowed in either House, although frequent reference may be made to copious notes. It is true that extracts from other documents may be openly read, but this permission does not apply to extracts from printed reports of speeches made in the same session. Here we detect a curious survival of the old idea that the publication of parliamentary debates is a breach of privilege. The rule has of late years been relaxed to the extent of permitting members to read from any book or even from newspaper reports of speeches in former sessions. Although it is considered highly improper to sit reading a newspaper in the House, and although technically the reporters in nightly attendance are strangers, present only on sufferance, every legislator fully recognises the power of the press, and special facilities are of course afforded for reporting the debates. Whilst freedom of speech is claimed and exercised in what has been called the grand inquest of the nation, jealous care is taken that it does not degenerate into license. It is forbidden to introduce the Queen's name in debate to influence the decisions of either House, Her Majesty being constitutionally placed above and outside the warfare of political parties. Nor may any speaker in either House make direct allusion to the other branch of the legislature; he must simply refer to it vaguely as 'another place.' This rule is founded on the notion that the doings of one House are unknown to the members of the other House, except where formally communicated; but it has also been explained by an eminent authority as designed to guard against recrimination and offensive language or frivolous retort between members of two distinct bodies. In the House of Lords every member is referred to only by his rank—as 'the noble Marquis'—or by his office—as 'the right reverend prelate.' Members of the House of Commons, unlike the peers, may not address each other or the House at large in public debate, but only the Speaker, as the chosen representative of all; and they may not refer to each other by name, but by the constituencies they represent or the office they hold.

Special care is taken to prevent as far as possible any unseemly or personal altercation amongst themselves on the part of the members of either House. If unbecoming language is used, the Speaker has large powers of reproof, and even of punishment; but it requires some familiarity with parliamentary usage to know when the bounds of propriety are overstepped. Fine distinctions are sometimes drawn as to what is permissible. Thus, it is not considered decorous to declare in debate that an opponent's words are false; nevertheless, you may emphatically deny the truth of them. In like manner you may, if a member, contemptuously declare your indifference to statements coming from 'such a quarter,' but not from 'such a man'—the latter form of words being considered too personal. If a member disregards the authority of the Chair, or, abusing the rules of the House, wilfully obstructs its business, he may be punished in ordinary cases by a week's suspension for the first offence, two weeks for the second, and a month for the third. This does not exempt the excluded member from serving on any private Bill Committees to which he had previously been appointed. Nor does it deprive the House of the power of proceeding against the offender, if so advised, more severely, in accordance with ancient usages.

The Speaker, after having called attention to the misconduct of any member who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either of his own arguments or those used by other members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech. In like manner the closure may be moved if the whole debate is being obviously carried by any number of members to undue length for the purpose of wasting time. The general body of members, whilst usually forbearing, are not themselves backward on occasion in indicating their impatience of tiresome reiteration. One effective way of stopping notorious bores is by coughs, conversation, cat-calls, farm-yard sounds, and loud cries of 'Vide.' Indignant at some such interruption, Daniel O'Connell once declared that he was not to be put down by 'beastly bellowing,' and on another occasion Burke announced that he would not be silenced by 'such yelping.' The Speaker or Chairman of Committees may order a member whose behaviour is disorderly to withdraw himself for the remainder of that day's sitting. The Speaker may also 'name' such member, and then ask the House formally to pronounce upon his conduct. To name any one means that he has so conducted himself as to cease for the time to be worthy of being treated as a representative member. The gravity of this distinction has not always been duly appreciated. Fox relates an amusing case in point. During debates it was the custom of Speaker Onslow, when any member was guilty of irregularity, to call out, 'Take care, or I'll name you.' On one occasion, in April 1804, a defiant member, not much alarmed by the customary threat, asked coolly, 'And suppose you do name me, what will be the consequences?' 'The consequences!' replied the Speaker, 'God knows.'

Speaker Abbott had a clearer view of the matter. In his time a member, entering the House after dinner in too merry a mood, made

some disparaging remarks about its Chairman, and, it is said, actually called upon him for a song. The Speaker thereupon 'named' the offender, and handed him over to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. Next day the flippant prisoner, now a sad and sober man, was brought to the bar, solemnly rebuked for his levity, and then discharged, after paying the customary fees on his release.

Any new member when first introduced to be sworn has to be escorted from the bar by two parliamentary friends of older standing, one on each side of him. At a given signal, the three advance slowly towards the clerk's table, where the oath is administered, and the roll signed by the newcomer. In their progress up the floor of the House, they must bow three times to the Speaker. A like obeisance has to be made on other occasions, as when the Usher of the Black Rod comes in stately procession to summon the attendance of Her Majesty's faithful Commons to the House of Lords, for the purpose either of listening to the Queen's Speech at the commencement of the session, or to hear a formal intimation, in old Norman-French, of the royal assent to Bills which have passed both Houses. So carefully is the people's chamber guarded against the intrusion even of lordly or royal emissaries, that the door of the House is always shut and bolted on the approach of Black Rod. It is not until he has knocked three times that the door is opened for his admission—a ceremonial denoting that the House reserves to itself the right to refuse entrance to any stranger.

Whilst these quaint trivialities indicate that the House of Commons is extremely jealous of any encroachment from outside upon its honour and dignity, there have been times when members themselves have flagrantly violated the respect it claims. For instance, in a debate in 1774, Mr Howard, M.P., alluding to proceedings connected with Mr Wilkes' election, said he agreed with that able lawyer, Sir Fletcher Norton, who had declared that he valued the resolution of the House of Commons no more than the resolution of a set of drunken porters. Again, during a debate in 1782 on Mr Pitt's motion for a reform in Parliament, Sir Charles Turner said he considered the House of Commons as a parcel of thieves who had stolen an estate, and were afraid of letting any person look into the title-deeds, through fear of losing it again.

In these early days, when legislators were apparently less accustomed to control their tempers, it is not surprising that one of the rules of the House—still enforced—was that neither spurs nor swords should be worn by members in attendance. But this prudent ordinance was sometimes resisted, as by one Earl of Ormonde, who in the Upper House told the Usher of the Black Rod, who had reminded him of the rule, that he should have no sword of his, except through his (the Usher's) body!

Although it is often assumed that the arts of obstruction are a modern growth, parliamentary records show that in old times they were practised on even such a trifling pretext as the question of candles. The House is now lighted by electricity, but before the times of gas, lamps and candles had of course to be used. Candles, how-

ever, were not at first allowed to be brought in without a motion regularly made and seconded for that purpose, and an order of the House pursuant thereto. Sometimes the question was debated until it became so dark that the members scarcely saw one another; indeed, this became a favourite way of delaying the business before the House. In order to check the evil, it was at last determined, in 1717, that the serjeant-at-arms have candles brought in when necessary without any express and formal order for that purpose.

Considering the strict propriety with which the business of Parliament is now, as a rule, conducted, it may shock many persons to learn that there was a time when the House of Commons had many of the characteristics of a taproom. History records that members, when in attendance, used occasionally to indulge themselves in the use of the fragrant weed; but a standing order, about the middle of the seventeenth century, decreed that 'no member must presume to smoke tobacco in the gallery or at the table of the House.' Spacious smoking-rooms are now provided, and also ample facilities for obtaining either dinners or other refreshment. There was a time when members ate nuts and oranges in the House, but now they are not allowed to partake of what are called tangible refreshments within the legislative chamber. The only exception is a glass of water, more or less qualified, to refresh any member thirsty or exhausted during the delivery of a speech.

More diligent than in its unreformed days, the House of Commons now scruples to adjourn on account of Derby day; but in early times it indulged in a holiday upon occasions which modern readers must consider still more strangely inadequate. Horace Walpole mentions in his Memoirs that in March 1751 the House adjourned to attend at Drury Lane Theatre, where *Othello* was to be acted by a Mr Delaval and his family. Again, in February 1781, a Bill introduced by Mr Burke with reference to the Civil List was read a first time; but the second reading was deferred to that day fortnight, 'because the 21st was to be a feast-day, and the 22d was the benefit of Madame Vestris, the favourite French dancer at the Opera.' Even when in session, the House was much given to amuse itself with petty or frivolous incidents, as is shown by some singular entries preserved in the official records. Under date May 1604, it is noted that a jackdaw flew in at the window. This was considered ominous, and apparently it proved a bad omen for the Bill in debate, as the measure was soon afterwards rejected. Again, we are told by the veracious State Chronicle that in May 1614 'a dog came into the House, a strange spaniel, mouse-coloured.' About one hundred and seventy years later, it is recorded that another canine intruder entered the House, taking his seat before the Speaker and all the Government. Not content to remain a silent spectator, the dog joined in the proceedings by barking loudly. Lord North, then Prime Minister, was speaking, and jocularly appealed to the Speaker, saying, 'Sir, I am interrupted by a new member.' The dog, unabashed, did not take the hint, but resumed his barking, whereupon the good-humoured Premier kept up the joke, protesting that 'the new member had no right to

‘speak twice in the same debate.’ In much more recent times almost equally trifling episodes have been known to relieve mightily the tedium of political contention.

A MURDEROUS MIXTURE.

By GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

‘You silly boy! You never seem to recollect that I was twenty years old—a woman grown—when you were born.’ She never lets me forget it. But it was no fault of mine that she was the first and I was the last of our family, and I do protest against Adelgitha at fifty-five treating me at five-and-thirty as if I was still the little boy she used to pet and amuse.

Between ourselves—strictly mind—Del is a great trial to me. For the last ten years, during which period I have been a clerk in the Local Government office, and the tenant of a charming cottage at Lambstead, she has kept house for me, and beginning largely, in my belief, this has gradually year by year firmed down very small, till now, when I have no hope whatever of any eligible *parti* coming to ask my consent to his union with my sister Adelgitha.

Well, there are not husbands enough for all of them; so I make the best of it; though, still between ourselves—for I would not have her know a word of it on any account—it has kept me single, and made me devote the love within my breast to flowers, over which it has glowed like sunshine, and no doubt been the active principle in my success with prize pansies at so many shows.

I resisted her at first, but I had to give in. For Del said it was horribly selfish of me to monopolise the garden; and, to quiet her, I purchased a pretty greenhouse, had it erected; and it immediately became a temple in which she was the presiding goddess—a sort of elderly Flora. But I had the stoking to do; and I plead guilty to having stoked the greenhouse fire in a most undignified way, and said things that will not bear repetition in print. Still, I stoked, and have gone on stoking year after year.

‘Never mind,’ I said to myself; ‘it pleases her;’ and I held my tongue, being rewarded with the announcement that I had been ‘very good;’ and Del went on gardening in her way, I in mine.

So I stoked; found her in pocket-money to buy fresh plants and necessities, down to the long brass squirt which would always send water where it was not wanted.

‘Anything for a quiet life,’ I used to say; and all was peace as long as Adelgitha simmered gently in her conservatory: but when she boiled over out of it, and into my garden, I grew wroth.

Like Russian usurpations, it began by degrees, and the insertion of the thin end of the wedge. How could I object to her poking snails out of the ivy with the point of her parasol, picking them up with an old pair of German-silver sugar tongs, and flinging them to me to crush? Or how could I forbid her giving a plant here or a flower there a teaspoonful of Nourisher? Neither could I complain about her filling a tin pepper-box with fine dry salt for the benefit of the slugs, and administering the same with deli-

cate impartiality in a dust-shower over their backs. I knew it would not last.

But, unfortunately, Del did not grow tired of my garden. The desire waxed; and she became so meddlesome and interfering, that I felt something must be done, and I reiterated the words, ‘Something must be done,’ one day when I returned from my office and found her busy tying up, with roffia grass, flowers which I preferred to see grow wild. There she was, with a necklace of the grass about her neck, and her scissors in her hand, tying and snipping away, what time Mrs Badger’s two beautiful Persian cats sat on the wall this side, and Triggs’ Sebright bantams sat on the wall on the other—all great enemies of mine, by the way—all watching intently the doings of one whom they evidently considered to be an intruder upon their domain.

I said nothing, but I thought a great deal; and after dinner, when I had had my modest half-bottle of Bulgarian claret, I made up my mind to open fire, and put a stop to what was a piece of feminine aggression not to be borne.

But I bore it. Poor little woman! she was so bright and chirpy and bird-like, that I had not the heart to speak.

‘She has not many pleasures,’ I said to myself; ‘and these are the days of women’s progress. Let me suffer and be strong.’

I rejoiced afterwards that I had not spoken, for the day of retribution was at hand.

It was about two months later, when I had become so wroth with keeping down my feelings and suffering in silence, that I had neglected my garden on the plea of being out of sorts, and had found that I had been really shouldered out of it. The young ducks had grown big and fat on the slugs, and the two Persian cats had been over a great deal, and had evidently had evening parties there, and invited neighbouring cats. Triggs’ bantams had been examining the flower-beds, too, a great deal; but the most conspicuous feature of neglect was the dotting all over of the gravel walks with tiny patches of grass and weed; for it was long since I had made my back ache by picking them out by the help of a worn-down cheese-knife.

I remember this special evening so well, for as I was walking gloomily up and down the garden, smoking a long square Manila, given to me by my old friend the Major, Del joined me with a shawl over her head, took my arm, and hung there, prattling about how she had improved the garden lately; while I—there! I say it proudly, as being greatly to my credit—I did not say one wicked word aloud. What took place internally is my business, not the world’s.

I smoked on in silence, and poor Del prattled, ending at last by announcing that now everything else was done, she intended to attack the weedy walks.

It was growing dark and damp by that time, and we went in; while, as Del went up-stairs to put away her shawl and tidy her hair, I threw the stump of my cigar into the fireplace and exclaimed in true melodramatic style, ‘Haha!’

‘Plee sir, Mr Triggs’ maid’s just left this note,’ said our little attendant; and as soon as the gas was lit, I opened and read:

NEXT DOOR, July 6th.

DEAR SCRIBE—I peeped over the wall to-night at my ten ducks. They look prime. Green peas

are crying to be picked, so shell out. I shall send a man for them on Thursday night when they are roosting. Their 'lodging is on the cold ground'—Old song. Keep the fattest pair for yourself, with the compliments of yours truly. 'Dill, Dill, Dill, will you come and be killed?' 'Nother old song.—Yours most neighbourly, T. TRIGGS.

GEORGE SCRIBE, Esq.

P.S.—My compliments to your sister.

P.P.S.—I wish you'd buy my bantams. Their eggs are too small. We want size, so I am thinking of keeping Spaniards.

'Triggs is going to send for the ducks on Thursday evening, Del,' I said when my sister came down.

'Is he? Oh, I'm very glad, dear. Don't have any more nasty things about the garden. I mean to keep it very tidy now.'

'Why don't you say my garden?' I muttered sourly; but of course she did not hear.

That was Tuesday night.

The next night, when I came home, Del met me in the little hall. 'Oh, I'm so glad you've got back, dear,' she said tearfully; 'I do so hate to see things suffer.'

'Eh? What's the matter?'

'Those ducks, George; I can't make them out!'

'Not stolen?'

'Oh no, dear. This afternoon Mr Triggs sent in his man to catch a pair of them to kill and cook at once; for he said company was coming unexpectedly, and he hoped you'd excuse it; but master had given you warning.'

'Yes,' I said contemptuously; 'but surely, my dear Del, you are not going to make a fuss about two ducks being fetched away to be killed. He did not kill them here, did he?'

'Oh no, dear. I don't mean that, of course. I don't like things one has petted being killed. If one were so particular, one could eat hardly anything. What I meant was the other ducks. For Triggs' man had to hunt them about and drive them a good deal before he could catch the two fattest.'

'Triggs said I was to have the two fattest,' I said.

'Yes, dear; so he did; but the man said he wanted two good ones, and he caught them nearly all before he was satisfied and took the pair away; and he laughed and said that hunting things made them tender—a wretch!'

'Well, is that all?' I said growlingly, for I wanted my dinner.

'No, dear. I want you to come and look at them; they have been so strange ever since.'

'What do you mean?'

'Why, they've been walking round and round and trying to tuck their heads under their wings, and tumbling over on to their backs, and then paddling with their feet, as if they were swimming upside down.—Look, dear; they are doing it now.'

I looked out of the window, and there, sure enough, was one of the ducks on its back in the middle of the lawn going on in the most insane way. A few melancholy quacks came from the old dog-kennel, at the bottom of the garden, in which they roosted; but I thought no more

about the matter till I had dined, when I said suddenly: 'The poor ducks must have had an attack of vertigo consequent upon being hunted. They were too fat to run. You fed them too well, dear. Gave them Indian corn meal every night, didn't you?'

'Yes, dear; they were so fond of it.'

'Ah, well, we are to have a pair. Cook 'em on Friday. You won't mind eating them?'

'Oh no, dear; I think not,' she said hesitatingly; and that night, according to my regular custom, I went to bed little dreaming of what was in store.

Oh Adelgitha! Adelgitha!

But wait. I will command my feelings, for I did recover the control of my proper domain.

It was breakfast-time the next morning, and I was late, and had not finished shaving—I always shave my chin—when, raising my eyes, I saw distinctly Broadley's fox terrier leap upon our dog kennel, and then jump on to the wall with something in his mouth. The next moment he had leaped down and was gone.

'I'll put wire-netting up,' I said to myself; and naturally enough, I thought I ought to do so on Triggs' side, where I could see his silver-spangled Sebright bantams sitting in a row on the wall with their feathers up, as if it was cold, though the sun shone brightly.

I hurried down, and found my sister making the tea.

'Let me see,' I said, taking my seat and opening the paper. 'Don't let Triggs' man have those ducks before I come back this evening. We've fattened them, and I mean to have the next best pair.'

'Very well, dear,' said Del, shutting down the teapot lid with a sharp pat.

'How are they this morning?'

'I haven't been down the garden, dear.—Ah, that's right, Mary; put them before your master.'

'If you plee, sir,' said the maid breathlessly, 'Mrs Badger's compliments, and would you step in directly?'

'Eh? I exclaimed. 'What for?'

'I don't know sir; only I'm afraid there's something wrong.'

'Bless my soul!' I exclaimed nervously, 'why has she sent for me? I can't go.'

'Plee sir, I don't know.'

'But you had better go, George, dear. It would be so unneighbourly not to go,' said my sister.

I felt it would be; and took my hat and went in to find Mrs Badger in an agony of tears, sobbing wildly as she sat on the floor of her little drawing-room with the stiffened bodies of her two Persian cats in her lap.

'Oh, Mr Scribe,' she sobbed—'oh, Mr Scribe, can't you save my poor darlings' lives?'

I looked at the cats with disgust, and shook my head. 'They are both dead, madam, and cold.'

'Yes, yes,' she sobbed wildly, 'so cold; and I've had hot bottles to them, and wrapped them in flannel; but it's all no good. Oh, my heart is broken! The wicked, wicked things.'

'Has somebody poisoned them?'

'No, no; it's the wicked foreign nature in them. They would steal, too, do all I would to feed them up and teach them better. I didn't know till two o'clock this morning, when I heard

them crying in the breakfast room, and then I came down, and Jane heard them, and came too. Oh, there was such a scene! Jane told me when last she had seen them—she had not liked to tell me before—she saw them each bring back one of your ducks and carry it into the wood-shed; and by the time she got down to try and save them, their heads were eaten off.

'Good heavens!' I exclaimed, for I felt that my fat pair had gone again.

'And it's a judgment on them!' sobbed the poor woman. 'I might have saved them if I had known; but it was not to be. Dead, dead, both of them; and oh, poor dears, poor dears, what gluttony! Of indigestion.'

I grunted.

'But tell me, Mr Scribe, you are so clever and so kind, what shall I do? My poor pets! What shall I do?'

'Well, madam,' I said, 'if I were you, I should have them stuffed!'

'Yes, of course,' she cried joyously; 'I knew you would advise me well. I will.'

I left her weeping, and hurried back to my breakfast; but I was not to eat it in peace. Before I had done, Major Broadley came round in a passion such as a fierce East Indian liverless officer knows how to pump up when thwarted. He insisted on seeing me directly, and shook his cane in my face.

'You scoundrel!' he roared—'you confounded civilian scoundrel! you have always been a nuisance to the neighbourhood.'

'Major Broadley!' I exclaimed.

'Oh, confound your indignation, sir!' he roared. 'You found fault with my dog, sir, for coming over into your wretched tea-garden place, where you have been a perfect pest with your ducks and bantams and Persian cats.'

'Major Broadley!' I exclaimed.

'Silence, sir! And so now, out of your malignant spite, you must lay your vile dead ducks in my dog's way and tempt him with them. The poor brute was in agony; but mark my words, sir—if that dog dies, I'll have the law of you, I will—I will! There!'

He struck the table with his cane, and bounced out of the house; while, as soon as I could gather my wits together, I rushed out into the garden, where the wind of my passage seemed to overset two of Triggs' bantams, which fell off the wall on to the path like balls of feathers, and did not move.

'What is the matter?' I cried as I ran on and passed a dead half-eaten quacker in a bed of zinnias; while in the dog kennel lay four more ducks—I think two were drakes, for they had curly tail feathers—dead.

I walked back into the house. 'Del,' I cried, 'the ducks must have been poisoned. Mrs Badger's cats, the Major's dog, have been eating them, and the bantams pecking them. They're all dying or dead. What can it mean?'

Adelgitha sank back in an easy-chair, looking white and scared.

'Do you know anything about it?—Speak, woman!' I roared.

'I—I—I don't—I think—I— Oh George, dear, do you think it was that stuff?'

'What stuff, woman?'

'That—that—that weed-destroyer.'

'Duck-destroyer, you mean. What did you give the poor things?'

'I—I did not give them anything.'

'But the ducks, the cats, the bantams—Hark!' I cried, as a horrible yell came from over the bottom wall; 'the dog is dead.'

'Oh George, could it have been?'

'Speak! What have you done?'

For a few moments she could not speak; then, in faltering tones: 'I saw it advertised—Hypo-demichemical acid—quarter of a pound to two gallons of hot water—to water the gravel paths—to kill the weeds.'

'But that could not kill the ducks!' I cried contemptuously.

'But it killed the worms, George; they came crawling up out of the sides by hundreds, and the ducks gobbled them up in the most dreadful way.'

'Adelgitha!' I exclaimed, 'I'm a ruined man.—Ah!' I yelled in the most awful tone as I dashed out of the back window, flew at and scrambled over the wall, and knocked down four dying bantams in my flight. For a horrid thought had struck me. Triggs had sent for two ducks the previous day, and he had visitors, and his family must be lying in the agonies of death.

I rushed into his house all unannounced. It was into an empty room. 'Too late!' I groaned, and ran down-stairs to the breakfast-room, where the whole family were assembled, and a servant stood with her back to me.

She turned round with a dish in her hand.

'Saved! saved!' I yelled, and snatched a pair of freshly-trussed ducks from the dish and fled, pursued by Triggs, who caught me as I was going over the wall.

'I say, old man,' he cried, 'are you mad?'

'Not quite,' I panted. 'Then you did not eat these last night?'

'Don't seem as if we're to eat 'em to-night,' he cried. 'Comp'ny didn't come. You can have 'em. The others'll do for me.'

'Poisoned!' I cried—'poisoned!' And as soon as I could get my breath, I explained all—to the Major too, for his dog was dead.

Adelgitha keeps to her conservatory now.

DETECTIVES AS THEY ARE.

By an Inspector.

THE lynx-eyed Detective of fiction has had more than his share of notoriety; his confrère in real life has never been able to lay claim to fame as lasting, for he is neither so clever nor so dull. He is not so clever, because he has to battle against the stern realities of a commonplace existence, that leave him no option but to grapple with them as they come; the difficulties which he has to overcome must be met with stern logical reasoning, and, however highly trained he may be, he is liable to fail whilst instinct plays no part in his life. He is not so dull; for whereas his very dullness in fiction is essential to delay the unravelling of the crime, and hold in suspense the ever-increasing interest and mystification of the reader, in real life it would be fatal to him, and put an effectual stop to his career.

The lynx-eyed detective and his want of ubiquity are venerable subjects now, and though

the Press as a matter of principle *must* grumble sometimes, it cannot be denied that it can be, and in many instances is, of very great value to the police. The British public is not easily pleased. John Bull pays high rates and taxes, and thinks the police ought by this time to have reached a state of efficiency bordering upon perfection; that is perhaps why, it being his national privilege to grumble and 'write to the papers,' he does occasionally rush into print when a crime is committed, and days lapse into weeks before the offender is caught and made to pay the penalty of his deed.

But when the criminal is apprehended and brought to the bar of justice, the Press, for the edification of the masses, records in full the evidence of the witnesses, the oratorical triumphs of Messrs So and So for the prosecution and the defence, and the summing up of the learned judge. Two or three lines only are devoted to the evidence of the detective who arrested the prisoner; the case ends, and all is forgotten.

There is in all this one point which the public in nine cases out of ten misses altogether—namely that the apparently insignificant evidence of the police officer is often that upon which the successful issue of the case depends. He may have spent days and nights over it, and without his untiring efforts the prisoner might never have been convicted. This applies more especially to cases of assault and robbery, and offences which are usually perpetrated in a low and disreputable neighbourhood; for these are cases in which evidence is most difficult to obtain, owing to the fact that witnesses know full well that to testify against prisoners of this class is a proceeding not unfrequently attended with positive danger to themselves. As a rule, people have but a hazy idea of the difficulties and obstacles that beset a detective's path. There are those whose childlike faith in his infallibility is only equalled by their absolute inability to assist him in any shape or form; and those whose unbelief in his capabilities is second only to the celerity with which they flee to him when they want his help and advice.

A detective's duties are necessarily multitudinous, and, as such, demand the display of tact, energy, and perseverance. The fact that a police officer must possess tact and judgment, and that a simple act on his part may be construed into a question of unwarrantable interference, is at once made apparent when it is stated that it has been held in a court of law to be sufficient cause for an action for false imprisonment if a detective stops a man in the street and asks to be shown the contents of his bag, because by so doing the officer has, though for a single instant only, arrested the man's progress through the streets, and thereby deprived him of his liberty. It may here be stated *en passant* that on the Continent, and notably in Germany, the police are not either collectively or individually liable to any action for false imprisonment.

It may, of course, be urged that to allow the police to arrest any one upon the barest suspicion is to put in their hands a power likely to sap the very foundations of an institution so dear to English hearts—the liberty of the subject; but it must be remembered that on the Continent there is no such thing as the liberty of the

subject, and that an explanation may be found in the framing of their laws, which presume a prisoner guilty until he proves himself innocent. English detectives have therefore to display equal smartness under less favourable circumstances; and the law which in England shuts a prisoner's mouth, allows the police magistrate abroad to question the accused as to the crime with which he is charged. If the unfortunate man 'changes colour,' and, terrified by the (perhaps) unfounded accusation, becomes confused and unable to remember what he did on a certain day, it tells against him, and he may be kept under lock and key for an indefinite period. The promotion of a French *juge d'instruction* depending to a great extent upon the ability with which he conducts a criminal investigation, and the speed with which he brings home to the prisoner the accusation brought against him, it is conceivable that in the hands of an unscrupulous man the knowledge of this might lead to considerable abuse.

A detective as a rule sees but the shady side of life. Its quarrels, its jealousies, its great passions, and its crimes are more or less familiar phases in his career. A magistrate sitting in his court has no doubt great chances of obtaining a clear insight into the mysteries of the human heart; but in his court a certain amount of decorum and quietness always prevails; it may therefore be said that to no man is a finer opportunity given to form a true judgment of the weaknesses of human nature than to the inspector in charge of the detective department of a large city. Prisoners and witnesses alike are brought to his office, where he investigates the cases. The writer has seen them in their different moods, from the calm bearing of the man of good position accused of forgery, to the insolent devil-may-care attitude of the pickpocket; from the sullen, defiant scowl of the wife-beater to the abject terror of the murderer.

Tales of woe and misery are poured into his ear, tales of sin and crime in all their naked truth and shame, and there, unfettered by the restriction imposed upon them by the far-reaching influence of a court of law, the accusation is spoken, by some with warmth, by others with a passionate vindictive outburst of anger; while the prisoner defends or justifies himself with the subtle ingenuity of an old offender; sometimes, alas! with the hopelessness of despair.

REQUIEM.

Let her rest; the weary night
Never brought her dreams like this;
Let her sleep; the morning light
Shall not wake her from her bliss.
Glad was she to end the fight;
Death hath conquered with a kiss.

Tired eyes need watch no more;
Flagging feet, the race is run;
Hands that heavy burdens bore,
Set them down, the day is done;
Heart, be still—through anguish sore,
Everlasting peace is won.

MARY MACLEOD.

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